

CHAPTER 4

Partners

BUILDING YOUR EQUAL JUSTICE NETWORK... YOUR TRAVELING COMPANIONS

I FEEL PRETTY

I feel networked
So connected
I'm connected to all that I see
And so networked
That the Rockefellers must fund me

See the legal services missing there
Who can make a dent in that need?
Such a big disgrace
Such an ugly mess
Who can fix it up?
Suddenly it's me!

I'm empowered
And effective
From the roots to the top of the tree
And I know
I'm complying with LSC!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

*From "East Side Story,"
written and produced for PARTNERSHIPS FOR JUSTICE,
Washington State's Second Annual Access to Justice Conference, June 1997*

A functioning network is like a spider's web. It provides the structure, nourishment and support to maintain the vitality of your Equal Justice Community in times of great uncertainty and change. It is anchored to its footings (the sources of ongoing support), yet maintains the flexibility to withstand chaotic external forces that threaten its integrity.

YOU ARE THE SPIDER. IT'S TIME TO SPIN YOUR WEB OF INCLUSION.

*A functioning
network is like a
spider's web. And a
web of inclusion is
an intricate set of
non-hierarchical
relationships
between and
amongst the full
array of civil equal
justice partners.*

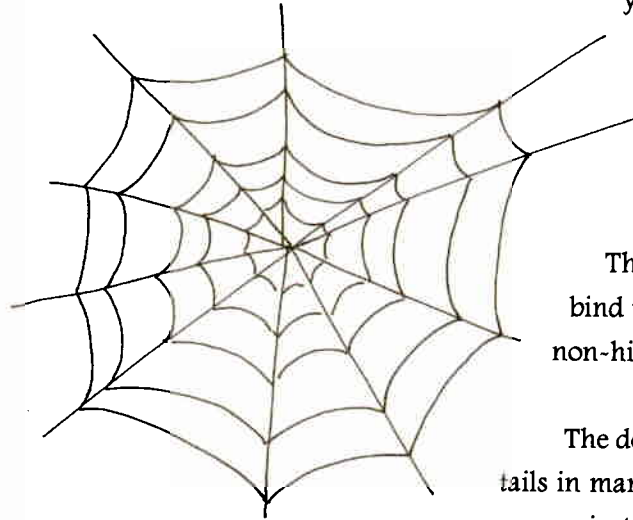
Judy (a legal aid staff attorney) to Emcee:

"We have a really great partnership for justice back home in Karma County. But when we heard all those other terrific grant applications, we realized that we can't sing this song just by ourselves. We need everybody — the rural offices and the statewide programs, the courthouse facilitators, the judges, and the bar associations! We're all in this together, and we can't do it alone."

From "Lawfulpalooza"

A web of inclusion is an intricate set of non-hierarchical relationships between and amongst the full array of civil equal justice partners. Just as a spider's web is not destroyed by violating one of its many anchors, so too, your web of inclusion must be designed to withstand a wide range of arbitrary, externally imposed dynamics, whether it be the loss of a core funding source, the passage of new laws adversely affecting your client base, a change

EQUAL JUSTICE
WEB OF INCLUSION



in the political winds, etc. Your web must have the integrity to withstand the challenges, and the disparate partners in

your Equal Justice Community must learn how to strategically re-deploy as changing circumstances dictate, much in the same way as the spider reconfigures her environs following a disruptive event.

The web's strands collect resources, and bind the community together in a lateral, non-hierarchical way.

The design of your web of inclusion dovetails in many respects with the technology and communications vehicles that use the same type of lateral transmission for interconnectivity and communication. Since the various strands of the web connect at many different points, anything that affects one part of the web reverberates across the entire network. A threat or harm to any one part of the network is felt by the whole, and the strong parts (for the moment) can support the threatened parts until they have been strengthened.

KEY STEPS TO BUILDING YOUR NETWORK

I. SURVEY THE CURRENT EQUAL JUSTICE LANDSCAPE

You may find it helpful when envisioning a viable Equal Justice Community to place your existing community into context. This can be immeasurably helpful as you take steps to accomplish the following:

- Identify others who care about justice
- Identify individuals, groups, or organizations who are or may be persuaded to be engaged in equal justice-related activities
- Document the history of your Equal Justice Community
- Pinpoint areas of overlapping functions
- Uncover forgotten resources

Experience teaches that pictures *are* worth a thousand words. It is helpful to develop visual models to help you and other members of your Equal Justice Community survey the equal justice landscape. If you're doing the exercises in this book, you already have documented the history of your Equal Justice Community (equal justice timeline). Now it is time to look for areas of overlapping functions (circles chart) and consider how to start building a solid foundation of partners for your Equal Justice Community (school of fish).

II. DEVELOP A CIRCLES CHART

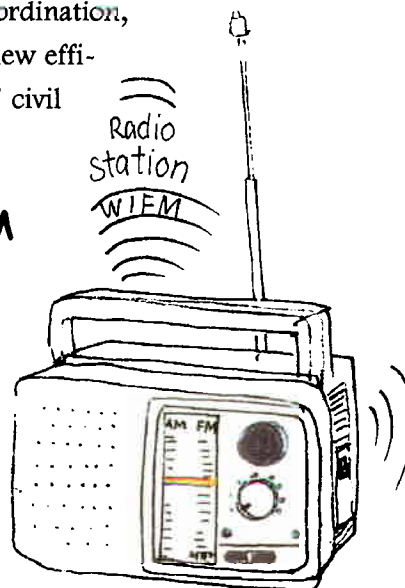
Overlapping initiatives and provision of services are enormous resource wasters (HIGHEST AND BEST USE). Your vision for a viable Equal Justice Community cannot include or tolerate this duplication of effort because it will confuse, frustrate, and detract from your efforts to build a cohesive and networked community. You can illustrate both overlap and gaps in services and resources in a circles chart. This chart chronicles "who's doing what," and will graphically illustrate problems around conservation of energy and coordination of effort.

To begin, think carefully about all of the equal justice activity in your community. (Review the Circles Chart in Part II to help you get started). If, for example, there are two legal services programs in a small community, each with its own intake system, draw them as overlapping circles. If you are aware that there is a bar committee, a judicial committee and a legal services program task force all looking at ways to simplify mandatory family law forms, draw them as overlapping circles. If the legal services community and the pro bono community each have annual training conferences, draw overlapping circles.

Don't feel discouraged if you don't know everything that's going on. The circles chart helps you identify the areas of wasted or redundant efforts. It is the beginning of the conversation. Applying your principles and core values (Chapter 2), you can begin the process of identifying areas in need of more active coordination, redundancies that need to be done away with, and new efficiencies that can be achieved across a wide range of civil equal justice activities.

III. TURN OFF RADIO STATION WIFM

The strength of a viable Equal Justice Community lies in the full and committed "buy-in" and participation of everyone on the ever-expanding list. In order to ensure this, we reject playing Radio Station WIFM (What's In It For Me) - the shorthand expression for turf-minded decision making. If you've been following the suggestions in this handbook, you should have the following tools already at hand: vision, principles,



Circles Chart:

If there are two legal services programs in a small community, each with its own intake system, draw them as overlapping circles.

NO TURF

**Who created
barriers? (You want
them, too, so you
can convert them.)**

core values and leadership to help change the dial. Modeling, recognition, peer pressure, inclusion and humor are also effective ways to change the radio dial.

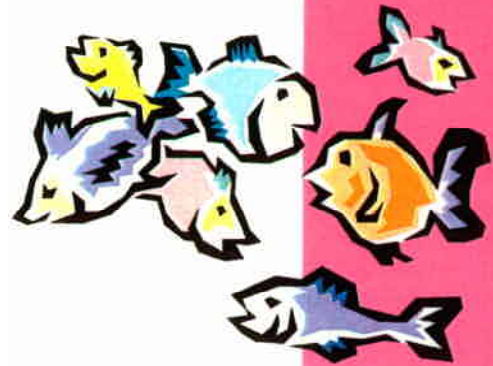
IV. THINK STRATEGICALLY

You will need to build an expansive Equal Justice Community for the future. Envision a school of fish. Schools of fish move with incredible precision and harmony. They demonstrate a collective instinctual sense of where they are going and a corresponding elegance and economy of group movement toward their destination. Draw a large school of fish on a large piece of paper. Label each fish with the name of a person or a group that is essential to your dream of accomplishing equal justice for all in your state, whether or not the people or groups are, or have been in the past, engaged in your Equal Justice Community's efforts. Think broadly! Don't lock yourself into a compendium of the USUAL SUSPECTS. Cast your net as widely as possible, but also think strategically. Study your Equal Justice Timeline and your Circles Chart. Who's missing? Who was particularly effective? Ineffective? Who created barriers? (You want them, too, so you can convert them). Do you have all the relevant institutions you need? All the important individuals? Is it bipartisan? Are there non-lawyers? Are there power-brokers? Are there client groups? Do you have a thoughtful and complete school of fish – your ideal Equal Justice Community?

The following list may help to fill in the gaps.

- ☐ Legal services providers — staffed legal services, pro bono programs
- ☐ "Specialty providers"
- ☐ Funders (IOLTA, bar foundations, state agencies, United Way, etc.)
- ☐ State Supreme Court
- ☐ State judiciary and judicial organizations
- ☐ Administrative law judges
- ☐ State Administrator for the courts, court clerks and administrators
- ☐ Pro se assistants, such as courthouse facilitators, domestic violence advocates
- ☐ Dispute resolution community
- ☐ Law schools (deans, clinical and academic faculty, students, student associations, alumni, etc.)
- ☐ Paralegal/legal assistant training programs and their associations
- ☐ State, local, minority and specialty bar associations (staff, leadership, members, sections, committees)
- ☐ State agency staff and staff lawyers
- ☐ Clients and client organizations

- ☐ Service providers for low income people
- ☐ Community and civic organizations
- ☐ Legislators
- ☐ Labor Unions
- ☐ Church groups
- ☐ Law librarians and public libraries
- ☐ Local businesses and business organizations
- ☐ Public defenders and their boards
- ☐ Prosecuting attorneys
- ☐ Corporate counsel; in-house counsel
- ☐ Local governmental officials and law enforcement
- ☐ K-12, vocational, community college and undergraduate educational leaders and communities
- ☐ Health care service providers
- ☐ Large law firm pro bono counsel
- ☐ Attorney General and staff
- ☐ The Governor and executive branch leaders and staff
- ☐ The U.S. Attorney's Office
- ☐ Media and communications outlets



V. THINK INCLUSIVELY

A web of inclusion continues to expand outward. As the strands become stronger, the web can support more activity. How can law enforcement support your efforts? Have you engaged the services of public television? Is there a role for those who have traditionally opposed the concept of free legal services for the poor? Can technology companies assist? What about retired people with time on their hands and skills to share?

VI. COMMUNICATE ! ! !

Communication is critical to the creation and maintenance of an Equal Justice Community. HOW you communicate and WHAT you communicate are equally important.

HOW: EVALUATE YOUR COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

Is your Equal Justice Community connected by a communication link that carries information and news of importance to and about the Equal Justice Community? Where and what are the gaps?

Tony: "Pardon me for being so forward, but I have to tell you I think you're the most worthy cause I've ever seen."

Maria: "And...and you could be the perfect partner for my grant application!"

From "Eastside Story"

Consider:

Hire a statewide (or regional) technology specialist to coordinate the development and support of an infrastructure to support communications through hardware, software and websites.

"Legal aid programs enhance family safety, increase economic opportunity, and ensure stable housing."

"Equal Justice for all is the cornerstone of our democracy."

- Lack of updated technology software and hardware capacity throughout your network?
- Costs of production and sharing written communication are too high?
- Geographic distance, lack of funds and/or adequate transportation systems don't allow in-person communication?
- No staffing to implement communication between and among numerous groups?
- Digital divide between those who have access to the Internet and those who do not?
- Inability to communicate in English due to language or disability and lack of access to translation tools?

Encourage those with communication resources to buy in to your vision and share their resources. IOLTA funding, state bar support and commitment by the administrator for the judiciary can play a critical role in ensuring that computers and e-mail/Internet access are available to most members of the Equal Justice Community.

Brainstorm and itemize every communication source in your state, including all communication vehicles. To jog your thinking: newspapers, state bar news magazine, local bar newspapers/newsletters, bar directory e-mail, service providers newsletters, listservs, association newsletters, judicial branch news updates, in-house newsletters for the various public and private sector members of the Equal Justice Community, public service radio and television stations, cable, websites. Then develop a strategy to use them all.

WHAT: DEVELOP CLEAR AND COMPELLING EQUAL JUSTICE "MESSAGES"

If you want your message to be heard among the cacophony of messages vying for the public's attention, it must be compelling and clear. Who are you? What do you do? Why should potential partners want to "buy in?" What are you offering them?

The entire effort here is to build community in service of your vision. Develop your messages. Repeat them regularly (a message is not heard until repeated the seventh time: THE SEVEN TIMES RULE). But, most importantly, walk your talk! Act inclusive. Be inclusive. Demonstrate your commitment to being mission-driven.

You are trying to build a community that includes both providers and supporters. In building your external support community, the tools and messages you employ will be different from those you might use in building community with potential providers.

In crafting an external message, serious consideration should be given to using a public affairs or communications specialist. On a local level, marketing majors at your local college or university may be willing to volunteer. Large law firms may offer pro bono access to their in-house or outside PR firm. The state bar's communications department is another place to turn. Look to national organizations for assistance. The Project for the Future of

Equal Justice has worked with a communications firm to develop basic messages about equal justice that resonate with the public, and that can be incorporated into your own communication strategies.

EXAMPLES OF "INTERNAL MESSAGES"

"Together, we can accomplish more for our client communities."

"Write no one off as a possible supporter of equal justice."

"Cooperation, collaboration and communication."

EXAMPLES OF "EXTERNAL MESSAGES":

"Equal justice is the cornerstone of our democracy."

"A society is judged by how it treats the least of its members."

"Equal justice for all is a keystone of fundamental fairness."

VII. GET YOUR NETWORK TOGETHER (THROW A CONFERENCE)

A state, regional or local access to justice conference may be the most important thing you can do to mobilize and build your community. We all know the value of face-to-face time with colleagues and the connections that can be made through person-to-person interactions. We could fill pages in this manual with factual examples of connections made, stereotypes erased, bonds formed, and initiatives that have taken hold. The vigorous use of humor and entertainment (Chapter 5) will dramatically increase the level of engagement by those who participate.

Conferences are opportunities to invite everyone to the equal justice party. Consider the following factual **examples**:

- In anticipation of an upcoming state legislative session, a bipartisan panel of state legislators made an excellent presentation to workshop participants about effective legislative advocacy.
- Judges and opinion leaders participated in a forum on whether establishment of a "Civil Gideon" would solve the equal justice crisis.
- Involving the Chief Administrative Law Judge in the conference planning resulted in high attendance by administrative law judges at the conference.

Conferences are also opportunities to establish and begin to move forward an agenda for your Equal Justice Community. Soliciting recommendations from individual workshops, compiling them into a set of conference recommendations, and updating them annually, is a powerful tool for both coordinating efforts and for gauging the success of your initiatives.

Example: A recommendation from an annual Access to Justice Conference called for the development of a statewide workplan on diversity, inclusion and

"Washington State's Access to Justice Network is a model public-private partnership working to provide critically needed civil legal assistance to low income residents of Washington State"

"The advantage of having an annual conference is to use the synergy of all of us to try to determine if we're doing a good job, where the problems are, and how we can solve them."

**Robin Lester, Director,
King County Bar
Association, Community
Legal Services Programs**

**Access to Justice
Conference Recommendation #10
(1999):**

"There is strong legal support for the notion of the right to counsel in civil cases (Civil Gideon), and we must begin to formulate specific strategies for its development."

***Responsible
Members:
Primary — ATJ
Board's Jurisprudence of Access
Committee, Access
to Justice Institute
Supporting — Access
to Justice Network***

Target date: The progress on this recommendation will be reviewed at the 2000 ATJ Conference.

You know you have a "Network" when you start getting calls from people asking to "join."

multiculturalism in the justice system. With participation by the Supreme Court, the State Bar, the Attorney General's office, the Council on Public Legal Education, the Access to Justice Board and others, the first step, spearheaded by the Council on Public Legal Education, is underway to develop a protocol for identifying diversity-based issues in the justice system.

HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN THERE IS A NETWORK?

While there's no definitive way to measure how strong your web has become, the following are factual **examples** of things to watch for:

- Pro bono programs have generously spent time and effort to educate the public and elected officials in their communities to support funding not for themselves, but for one of the statewide legal services providers.
- The "Equal Justice Network" (or whatever you choose to call it) becomes a term of art.
- You get calls from people asking how they can "join" the equal justice network.
- You get calls from people who are offended that they don't see their organizations on "the list."
- People start jockeying for plum roles in the annual conference play a year in advance.

EXERCISES

- ✓ Draw your own Equal Justice Community “circles chart.” Use the model at the end of this chapter to get you started.
- ✓ Create a school of fish representing your “dream” Equal Justice Community. Use the model at the end of this chapter to get you started.
- ✓ Develop an Equal Justice message that describes your vision

REFERENCES TO PART II

Washington State’s First Circles Chart — 1994	page 119
Sample Equal Justice messages: Equal Justice Coalition Backgrounder and FAQs	page 120
Washington State Access to Justice Conference Program (1999)	page 123
Washington State Access to Justice Conference Recommendations (1999)	page 131
Southwest Regional Access to Justice Conference Report and Recommendations (1999)	page 143

Workshop topic:

**Courthouse
Facilitators**

Problem:

Courthouse Facilitator positions are sometimes politically controversial and subject to “turf wars” among court and county personnel.

Proposed solutions:

Search for ways to reduce political conflict around facilitator positions locally and state-wide.

From
“Recommendations”
from 1999 Southwest
Regional Access to Justice
Conference

CIVIL EQUAL JUSTICE "CIRCLES CHART":

